644 2. Next come the Ouidi Naba, the Larralé Naba, the Kamsaogo Naba, the Gounga Naba, the Nemdo Naba, and the Poé Naba.

[527 788] 3. On Friday and other Moslem holidays, the imam who represents Islam at Ouagadougou comes to give the doua, a kind of benediction which consists of reciting verses from the Koran, in the morning as well as in the evening.

Lebeg'sonre. As soon as these honors have been completed, the Mogho Naba goes back into his house to put on a less dazzling costume. Shortly thereafter he once more returns to the courtyard.

[59] Next the Baloum Naba and his retinue present their respects as described above. The Ouidi Naba and his followers are not required to do so unless they have foreigners to present to His Majesty.

[533] Then, the Bend'Naba, gangando, and luinsé (drummers) and the doudissi (violin players) play together in praise of the Mogho Naba.

It should be noted that the Mogho Naba speaks to no one before his morning appearance. It is not until he has finished his ceremonial duties and returned to his apartments that his tampa (sisters) greet him.

644 273 Before the officials and ministers of the court return to their homes and as soon as the Mogho Naba has withdrawn, the Sogon'-kassanga, that is, the ranking servitor, offers them some dam (known as dolo or fermented millet beer).

1. One canari [jar] of dam is offered to the Baloum Naba, who is obligated to give a gourdful to the Zusoaba, one to the Wedkim Naba (chief groom), and one to the Soré Naba (Bendré, "chief of the path").

2. A canari of dam is then offered to the Ouidi Naba who is obligated to give a gourdful to the Poé Naba (chief confessor for the wives and pages of the Mogho Naba) and one koré [gourd] to the Bend'Naba. He drinks the remainder with the other ministers in his retinue.

[276] 3. On Fridays and holidays, kola nuts, gouré are offered to the imam after he has given his doua and before the Mogho Naba goes to renew his pledge of loyalty [60] to France before the representative of the Republic in Upper Volta.

631 duty of these representatives to assemble the notables of the villages and to order them to submit to the new naba, the only one recognized by the Mogho Naba.

631 In order to show their joy,[1] the people have large quantities of
● 527 beer prepared, and games are organized which may continue for several days. The village notables come to offer their submission and to swear fealty, bringing gifts (cowries, sheep, etc.) in accordance with the resources of the village and the wealth of the inhabitants.

631 When the nayirdamba leave for Ougadougou, the naba gives:
431 a wife and a robe to the Bilbalga; a wife and a robe to the soroné of the Mogho Naba; a wife and a robe to the soroné or the Baloum-Naba; a wife and a robe to the child of the Bend'Naba; etc.

Any children born to the women [145] so given belong, respectively, to the masters of these representatives.

631 Burial. Their burial is carried out in much the same manner
766 as in the case of the Mogho Naba, except for the specific persons involved. The arrangement of the tomb is also similar, although there is, of course, less pomp displayed. [146]

[1] [i.e. At the appointment of the new naba—Analyst]

Chapter 9

The Two Major Mossi Festivals

Mossi Festivals

796 In actual fact, there is only one annual festival celebrated by
527 the Mossi. It is known as tinsé or tingana. A second festival, which is more a family affair, is called basgha. The latter is variously named, depending on the region: for the Mogho Naba, it is called m'barengma; for the ordinary Moaga, basgha; in certain regions, kinkirga; etc. Although the date for the first festival is fixed by the Mogho Naba, the second festival is celebrated by each canton chief, each village chief, or each ikanda (married man) on any day that suits him, usually after the harvest.

In addition to these principal festivals, every important village has its annual festival, a kind of special market day. On

796 that day there is dam (beer) in every house and abundant meat,
527 and the inhabitants of nearby villages come to the festivities.

Here we shall describe only the two major festivals, tinsé and basgha.

Tinsé (Mossi Ritual Festival), or Naba Oubri Ma Kouré (The Funeral of Naba Oubri's Mother)

796 Origin. Naba Oubri, son of Zoungrana and [147] founder of
769 the Ouagadougou dynasty, gave his mother a very impressive kouré (funeral). The kouré took on the appearance of a great festival because of the large number of animals sacrificed, the generous supply of food, and the great quantity of beer (dam) prepared. Since Oubri was very powerful, he ordered that the anniversary of his mother's funeral should be celebrated every year, even after his death. His mother was Pogh'toe Hinga (literally, "bearded woman").

For this reason and also to obtain health for his people and abundant rain for their crops, the Mogho Naba still quite regularly celebrates this annual festival known as tinsé (from tinga "earth"). There is no set date for it; it is celebrated whenever possible, usually after the harvest.

796 Preparatory sacrifices. Before setting the date for the tinsé,
769 the Mogho Naba has livestock (cows, sheep) and roosters killed
782 on the tombs of his predecessors.

According to precedence, the sacrifices begin with Naba Zoungrana, Oubri's father, whose tomb is at Komtoega in the circle of Tenkodogo. The Mogho Naba sends a cow to the Loumbi-Raogo Naba to be sacrificed on the tomb of Naba Oubri. Oubriyaogo Naba (the guardian of Oubri's tomb) has the duty of sacrificing the animal.

The other animals are sacrificed by the Ouagadougou Naba, representing the family of the Ninissi (first [148] inhabitants of the country). He is accompanied by the eunuchs who are the guardians of the tombs (yad'nanamsé).

In order to honor emperors whose tombs are in various parts of the colony, representatives of the Mogho Naba are sent out with

264 meal of sagbo in the evening.

What we call breakfast is hardly known. Between the two main meals, however, the chiefs have meat grilled or roasted. They are very fond of it and have it seasoned with enough salt and pepper to make it possible to consume the endless number of [273] small gourds of beer which they drink from morning to night.

The Moaga has only one real meal a day, the evening meal. A large millet cake satisfies the day's hunger. If there is any left over, he keeps it carefully for his morning meal. If there is none left, a frequent state of affairs, he makes do with his zompanrga, crushed millet diluted with water and sometimes eaten with a bit of vegetable fat or a few peanuts.

He rarely eats any rice, and if he has no sagbo, he contents himself with benga and souma.

261 It is during the festivals that the Moaga eats his fill. At such
●527 times the head of the compound kills a goat, a sheep, or some chickens and has sagbo and fabirama prepared, or beans with copious amounts of karite butter. This is the feast. The members of the family stuff themselves to the point where attacks of diarrhea are inevitable. The results of the attacks are all the more serious in that they are never cared for properly.

263 The only seasonings known to the Moaga are kalgo (soumbala),
439 red pepper, okra, and salt. No more than a few years ago, however, before the [251] development of trade in the colony, salt was brought from Timbuktu and Mopti by the Dioula and Yarcé and was so expensive that the Mossi people who lived in the countryside often went for six months without tasting salted food.

241 There is reason to believe that the time is not far off when the Moaga will devote his efforts much more intensively to cash crops, such as cotton, potatoes, peanuts, etc. In this domain, the province chiefs at Ouagadougou have made real progress.

Mogh'Nab' Kawinré (Threshing the Grain of the Mogho Naba)

241 Sacrifices. For this ceremony, the emperor summons the
643 Mankougoudougou Tengsoba (a descendant of the autochthonous
782 Nioniossé, masters of the land) to Ouagadougou and gives him a

782 Friday evening. The sacrifice is the usual one described earlier, but
769 the invoking formula is replaced with the following: "Soul of my
796 father, stretch out your hand and take this chicken which I offer you; grant me to reach next year in good health, and I will return with another chicken." The chicken killed on the grave is not roasted as in other sacrifices, but cooked in water.

On those days one must be careful not to sleep outside. The souls come to drink beer from the vats, and woe to those who lie in their way. They will kill them or at least make them seriously ill.

782 On the feast day itself, all those who have some obligation toward
769 the naba or toward the man who is holding the festivities, such as
796 those to whom he has given a wife or who have asked him for one,
431 come to greet him with a rooster and cowries if they did not come on the previous day. Many of his subjects, especially the canton chiefs, also come to offer their rooster and cowries. On the other hand, if an important visitor comes on that day, it is an elementary rule of civility to offer him a rooster.

782 Usually, on the very day of the festivities, no sacrifices are offered
769 on the graves. The victims are offered to the protective kikirsi of
796 the hut, of the inner courtyard, of the outer courtyard, of the whole soukala. The number of sacrificed chickens varies in proportion to the number of gifts. When the sacrifices are over, the naba assembles his people, and the beer is brought in and presented to him. He first pours a little on the ground as an offering to the ancestral spirits, then he drinks and distributes the ars among his people. This is not
[273] a good day to discuss important matters, because after noon everybody is more or less drunk.

On the following Monday and Wednesday, the naba proceeds at dawn with great pomp to two neighboring villages (Nakalbo and Sabré) to sacrifice a beef to the tangandé. Much feasting ensues there on those two days; the naba loses a beef /in each village/ but gains many chickens and a few thousand cowries. He also goes to the village of Toulgou on the day when basra is celebrated in that locality, because his family originated there.

527 The kibsa is the Moslem sheep feast, and it is celebrated forty days after the end of the great feast. All Mossi celebrate it in private; every family has brewed millet beer, and on that day millet mush is replaced with rice and meat. These festivities are even more intimate than the previous ones in the sense that they are held

[574] everywhere on the same day, and by and large people stay home to eat and drink. They go visiting on the days which follow.[1]

On the morrow of the day when the moon appears on the horizon, that is, nine days before the feast, the chief of the Kalmodo Yarsé solemnly comes to greet /97/ the naba of Koupéla. He bears in his hand the spear of Naba Silga, one of the predecessors of the present naba, and speaks approximately as follows. Naba Gado (the naba of the Kalmodo Yarsé) and Naba Silga were friends. The slave of Naba Gado ran away, and the naba looked for him everywhere but could not find him. Naba Gado went to Naba Silga and said; "My slave has run away, and I have looked for him everywhere in vain." Naba Silga replied, "I have not seen him either." And Naba Gado went on looking for his slave. Finally he found him and came to tell Naba Silga, who had the slave returned to him. To show his gratitude, Naba Gado offered Naba Silga the feast of fire. The latter refused, saying, "It is fire, and fire burns." Then Naba Gado suggested the fast, Ramadan. Naba Silga refused again, for fasting is hunger and thirst, and would a friend make such a gift to his friend? Then Naba Gado suggested the kibsa, but with the condition that every year Naba Silga should prepare abundant food for him and all his people, that all should come and celebrate the festivities here and make merry with their hearts full of joy. Naba Silga readily agreed.

When the naba of Kalmodo finishes this little speech, the first wife of the naba of Koupéla offers him a gourd of water, for Moslems do not drink fermented beer, and the naba of Kalmodo sings the praises of all the predecessors of the present naba of Koupéla. Then everyone makes noise and dances. A week later, the naba of Kalmodo always returns with the spear and the war drum. The naba of Koupéla offers him a beef which the naba of Kalmodo slaughters. He pours the blood on the spear and says, "May God grant health to the naba and to his ministers!" The naba has the victuals brought in. When all have eaten, they come to greet the naba, saying, "May God grant you another year!" and then they depart.

These two festive days, basra and kibsa, are observed by all Mossi. (3) There are others peculiar to the naba of Koupéla, which we shall

3. To be exact, it must be said that the name basra is not used everywhere in Mossi country, but the feast itself appears to be

[1] [i.e., following the Kibsa, the Moslem sheep feast. - Analyst]

527

observed everywhere. In Bélousa, it is called kytouara. The name kibsa, on the other hand, is known everywhere, but special circumstances may prevent its celebration. Thus the warriors of one canton were defeated on that day, consider the kibsa unpropitious, and no longer celebrate it.

mention briefly.

The naky (naba ky, "naba's millet") is the naba's personal feast. It is always celebrated on a Saturday, like all the naba's ceremonies. It is proclaimed at market by the village-crier twenty-one days beforehand. [782] Seven days before the feast, the naba sacrifices a goat on the threshing floor and eats it on the spot after it has been roasted. The three nabas assigned as keepers of the naba's millet thresh a little grain, and every day they return to the grounds to thresh a little more until the day of the festivities. The quantity of millet thus flailed does not fill more than two baskets.

On the day of the feast, early in the morning, the high ministers go with their retinues to greet the naba: "May God be with you; may God grant you to see the year through!" A procession is formed and proceeds to the naba's threshing floor. His sisters and wives take part of the millet threshed on the previous days and carry it /98/, shrieking and dancing, to a granary located outside the naba's soukala. Then everyone drinks copiously.

Two days later, in the evening, another ceremony takes place. The naba's relatives go to the threshing floor and wrap the remaining millet in grass stalks; the bundle is carried to the sound of drums with jesting, shrieks, and dancing, as on the day of a burial. The millet is placed in the granary alongside the grain brought in on the day of the feast, and a sheep and a chicken are sacrificed nearby and [782] shared among those present. The naba does not partake of this flesh. Actually he hides throughout the ceremony, for if he saw the pro- [784] cession he would die.

What is the origin of this custom, which reminds the naba that in spite of all his power he is mortal like his subjects? What is the origin of that other custom, mentioned earlier, of building near his dwelling the hut where he will be buried? The Romans used to remind their

527 victorious heroes that they were only mortals. The thought of death is wholesome and beneficial.

The "bean feast" is so named because on that day the naba eats bean sauce for the first time in the year.

The naba's hoeing ceremony (na-kobo) is celebrated twenty-one days after the previous one, and like it, like the naky, always on a Saturday. When the naba of Koupéla was solemnly invested by the naba of Bélousa, he used to go with a large number of horsemen and much pomp to hoe a field located some distance from Koupéla. Nowadays he merely breaks ground on a path which connects his huts with those of his two prime ministers. He gives the first blows with the [526] hoe to the sound of drums, and his men take up from there. If the [273] Peul and the horsemen have come in sufficient numbers, they run races. As is usual in such circumstances, beer flows freely, and at the end of the day everyone is drunk. These festivities bring the naba a few thousand cowries offered by his subjects.

ooo There ceremonies, naky, nakobo, do they not constitute a sort of homage to agriculture, do they not recall similar festivities celebrated long ago by the Romans and even today by the Chinese?

443 The market which follows each of these feasts is always crowded. Several beeves and large numbers of sheep are killed. Everyone makes a point of attending in his very best clothes, and the sight of this motley crowd is quite interesting indeed.

Chapter 3. Magic

ooo Mgr. Le Roy, as already mentioned, defines magic as "the art of coercing into one's service the forces of nature, or harnessing the powers of the invisible world, through certain occult practices of a more or less religious character." This is what we shall now study. To put some order into a subject which is wholly lacking in it in the mind of the native, we shall first discuss the superstitions, then the sorcerers.

[181] Like all primitive people, black or white, the Mossi are very superstitious. Were not our own ancestors, in the Middle Ages? Have superstitious beliefs, such as those concerning thirteen people at table,

592 1. Husband.
2. Wife or wives.
3. Unmarried children, sons or daughters.
4. Slaves.

Sometimes, it also includes young unmarried brothers (see above).

592 As a rule, every soukala-household has only one large bush
241 field in addition to the garden plot surrounding the soukala (where
461 maize and large red millet are grown during the rainy season, tobacco and cotton during the dry season).

The head of the household, his unmarried sons and unmarried brothers, work on those fields during the rainy season from six in the morning to three in the afternoon, with a long rest period around noon. The women work there also, but their hours are different owing to their household tasks.

The unmarried sons and brothers also have small individual plots of cotton and large red millet. They work them in the afternoon after three o'clock. During the rainy season, as a rule, there
● [527] are no rest days. A few Mossi, however, have adopted the customs of their Yarsé neighbors and rest on Friday. Others, who are Moslemized, and incidentally very few, rest both on Friday and on Monday.

During the dry season the members of the household repair hut roofs, go hunting, or else participate in the clearing of family fields, etc. In addition to this they work for themselves, as weavers for example. The money earned in this fashion goes to them and not to the soukala head.

592 /556/ It is the head of the soukala-household, the husband and father, who provides all occupants of the soukala with food throughout the year, morning and evening. He also provides clothing for those who cannot provide their own, but those who can do so procure it themselves.

592 We know that it is sometimes the head of the family and some-
584 times the head of the household who gives the children of the house-
464 hold in marriage. It sometimes happens, however, that a son
● 565 leaves the soukala without his father's permission. He usually does this in order to win a wife, when the head of the family or the

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?" the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets."

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capitals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance, is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Christians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional ancestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadan, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies except those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more persons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*